

## every time you smile i smile by gaymoregirls

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**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Robin Buckley, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Billy Hargrove & Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Eleven | Jane Hopper & Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Eleven | Jane Hopper/Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington, Robin Buckley & Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Robin Buckley & Steve Harrington, Will Byers & Eleven | Jane & Dustin Henderson & Maxine Mayfield & Lucas Sinclair & Mike Wheeler, Will Byers & Maxine "Max" Mayfield

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**Summary:**

Eleven and Max get together, though it takes a while and also takes cameos from most of the cast to help Max get her shit together. Feat. Max Mayfield the useless bisexual.

## every time you smile i smile

We meet at the video store on Saturday ten minutes after Steve and Robin's shifts start. This is the prime time to get there. Not only do we know they'll be there, but it's before Robin has had coffee, so annoying her is even more enjoyable than it usually is.

I carpool with Mike and Lucas, since they live the closest to me. It's June 25th - we've been doing this every weekend since school let out. We spend three hours at the video store Saturday morning for shits and giggles, go out for lunch, and then come back on Sunday to actually buy movies. It's a nice little routine we share, and this particular Saturday is no different.

At least, not at first.

I head inside with the guys to discover the others already there. Will is cross legged on the ground next to the counter scribbling something in a notebook - probably one of his drawings. Dustin is deeply engaged in a conversation with Steve that seems to be about horror movies or hot dogs (don't ask - it's hard to tell with them), while Robin looks on skeptically, the bags under her eyes about ten times more prominent than they will be an hour from now. I immediately scan the scene for Eleven - it doesn't take much looking to find her. She's wearing a hot pink button down over jean shorts, and studying a rack of movies carefully.

I head to the counter and hop up onto it, taking my usual seat. "Hey, guys!"

Robin shoots me a *get the fuck off my counter or I will kill you in a pre-caffeine rage* look, that I choose to ignore, and instead respond to with a wide smile. "Absolutely lovely to see you on such a fine morning, Robin!"

She flips me off, and I return the gesture. Over by the movies, I see El watching us and giggling, which makes me blush more than I'd like it to.

The last of our crew, Jonathan, comes through the door juggling four

plastic cups that Robin immediately lunges at. "Woah, there," he says, taking a step back. "Robin, you know only sane people get coffee."

She feigns innocence, smiling sarcastically and standing still for all of five seconds before Jonathan rolls his eyes and hands over the cup.

"You know," Robin says after chugging half the cup, "You truly are what is right with American men, Jonathan Byers."

"I heard that!" Steve calls out to her, but he's approaching the other two with a wide grin.

"You too, dingus. As long as you stay on my good side, I'll allow there to be two half decent men in the world."

"Glad I'm considered half decent to my best friend." Steve leans over to kiss his boyfriend, and takes the cup off coffee. "Thanks babe."

Speaking of best friends, I head over to mine while the three of them continue bantering. El smiles when I approach, immediately reaching out her hand to take my own. I really wish she wouldn't do that. It just confuses me more than I already am, even though I know it's just platonic.

Now. Does that mean I let go? Absolutely not.

"Good morning," Eleven says softly.

"Hey." I sit down next to her. "How was your date?"

She blushes furiously, which sends a boulder tumbling down my throat. "Wasn't a date. He is just Will and nothing more."

"Are you sure about that?"

"We just watched a movie. And talked."

"Ooh, talking." I lean my head back. "Sounds sexy to me."

The blush in her face deepens. "Wasn't. We just had a conversation. We both needed it."

“What could you and Will Byers possibly be talking about that would not end in a makeout session?”

She smiles secretively. “Just things.”

“Suuuure.” I tap my foot against the grey carpet. “I still can’t believe you cut off Mike the way you did. Remember when you said he was your dream boy?”

She nods. “I was wrong. Not what I am looking for.”

Before I can pry further, a woman comes into the store. She’s tall, with black hair and long legs that are covered to the knee in rainbow socks. She walks up to the counter and strikes up a conversation with Robin about some movie or another. Robin suddenly has this goofy smile on her face, and her hand is anxiously tapping against her knee. Everyone is watching them, and when Robin points the girl to another section, Steve pounces immediately.

“Are you *ever* going to ask her out?” he asks, poking her in the arm.

She looks down, but she’s smiling. “Probably. At least I know she’s gay.”

“Which is why you need to ask her the fuck out already!” Jonathan takes a swig of coffee. “Opportunities like these aren’t just lying around.”

I still get butterflies sometimes when I look at Robin - once I found out she liked girls, I had the biggest crush in the world. She’s *hot*, and I will not deny that even now. Still, the butterflies aren’t anything compared to what I feel when I look at -

“Max.” El squeezes my hand, pulling me out of my thoughts. “You ok?”

“I...” I trail off, getting lost in her brown eyes for a split second. “Yeah. I’m ok.”

“Alright.” She smiles, and my heart skips a beat. “Should we look for a movie?”

...

That night at home, I walk into Billy's room without knocking. A year ago, I wouldn't have done that without a death wish. But after everything that happened last summer, he doesn't mind as much.

He doesn't look up when I come in. "Hey."

"How was your day?"

"Fine. Yours?"

"Fine."

He continues typing furiously on his computer. Probably something for work. I sit on his bed and take out my notebook. I continue to work on a poem I've been trying to get right for the last week. Will gave me this idea - when I told him I wanted to get into something creative, he suggested starting with words. I've already filled two notebooks with those words - some stories and songs, but mostly poems.

Mostly poems about Eleven.

It started out as just one or two lines here and there - a little bit of prose late at night when I couldn't sleep. But it slowly became a full poem, and then a full collection of poems, and then my notebook was full within three weeks and I realized writing was... wonderful.

"Hey Billy?" I blurt out.

He turns around, a little annoyed. "What? I'm busy, Max."

I debate asking him what I really want to - how the hell he's had so many girlfriends, and how he got them to go out with him. I debate asking him about mom's stance on gay people, or how she would feel if someone - say, her daughter - came out as bisexual. I debate asking him if he ever experimented with guys, though I doubt he did.

But I'm scared to do that, so instead, I say, "Do you know what's for dinner?"

...

The next morning, I get a radio from El ten minutes after I wake up.

I answer immediately, my stomach flipping over in excitement. "Morning, El!"

"Hi." She sounds groggy, but I know she's smiling from the way she's speaking. "Do you want to hang out today?"

"Aren't we going to the video store with the guys?"

She's definitely smiling now. "I thought we could ditch them. Girls day?"

Hearing Eleven say 'girls day' is quite possibly the sexiest thing I've ever experienced. "That sounds amazing. Starcourt at noon?"

"Yes. See you there." The mic disconnects, and I flop back onto my bed with a giddy smile. One on one time with El, while not an unusual occurrence, still makes me feel special. Like she cares enough about me to want to spend an entire day with nobody but me.

I quickly pull an outfit together, put on a bit of mascara and lip gloss, and grab my board from the closet. It's not a short ride, but I always skate to Starcourt, especially in early summer, when the heat is still bearable and the sky is bright and gives me some much needed sun.

I actually pass by the Byers' house on my way to the mall, and I spot Will on the front stoop doodling in a sketchbook. It's still early, so I pull over and smile at him. "Hey, dude! Shouldn't you be at the video store?"

He grins. "We pushed it back. I assume you're on your way to hang out with El?"

I nod, and he smirks. "She's really excited about that."

"She told you?"

"Yeah. We're a lot closer than you might think." He studies me carefully in a way I'm not sure I like. "You two are just friends, right?"

I laugh, but internally I'm having a panic attack. "What? Of course.

Why would you even ask that?"

He shrugs. "Just curious. You know, if there *was* something else going on, none of us would care."

"Well, it doesn't matter, because we're both straight."

"Speak for yourself."

My breathing literally stops. "Eleven isn't straight?"

"I never said that. I just mean that you shouldn't assume." Will's eyes are unreadable, but he seems to be considering his next words. "You know I'm not, right?"

"Assuming?"

"Straight."

"I did not know that, but I'm not gonna pretend I'm surprised." I put a hand on his knee. "Mike?"

He's not looking at me, but he nods a little.

"Yeesh. Straightest of the straight. I'm sorry, Will."

"Don't be. I'll get over it someday."

I know this is my moment. This is when I'm supposed to comfort him by saying, *me too! I'm also in love with someone that will never ever love me back!*

But I'm scared as hell, so of course, that doesn't happen. Instead, I end the conversation abruptly and skate away.

Coward.

...

When I finally get to the mall, I feel like I'm going to explode. I can't get Will out of my head, and I can't stop thinking about just how many people in my circle of friends aren't straight. Robin isn't. Steve and Jonathan aren't. And now Will. I'm starting to realize that maybe

he's right - maybe nobody would care if I just came right out and said it.

So when I get to the mall and see El, I don't ignore the way that my heart instantly melts when I see her. She's wearing the first dress I ever helped her pick out - black with all sorts of colourful designs on it. It's eccentric, just like her.

I run over and hug her from behind, causing her to squeal and try to push me off, but I don't let go. Eventually she turns around, and holy shit her face is so close to mine that I could lean in one centimeter and kiss her.

"Where are we going today?" I ask, reaching down to take her hand.

"You pick first." She smiles, and my god, why can I not control myself around this girl?

"Ok - maybe ice cream and then clothes?"

So that's what we do. We run around the mall, spending too much money and running on a full sugar high. El gets mint chocolate, which I think tastes like toothpaste, and I get dark chocolate, which she thinks tastes too bitter (to each their own). We go to Macy's and try on the entire fucking store. At one point, I come out in a low-cut cropped tank over jean shorts, the kind of thing I would wear to skateboard, and she turns so red she looks sunburnt.

"You... look really nice," she stutters.

Kill me. Kill me. Kill me. "Thanks," I reply, attempting to sound casual.

The rest of the day is a blur of colors, and escalators, and shitty food court food, and Eleven's smile. When we part ways for the night, I look across the road and see that the lights in the video store are still on - they don't close until six. I practically sprint across the road when I see a feminine figure hanging something in the window - there's something I really need to do.

...



"You're out late," Robin remarks when I walk behind the counter and set down my stuff.

I shrug, and I think my silence makes the room feel off, because she immediately walks over. "Are you ok?"

"Uh..." I hesitate. "Could I ask you a question?"

"Sure." She hops onto a stool. "What's up?"

I consider my words. "Girls. How?"

Wow. Great word choices Max.

She studies me. "Are you coming out?"

I shrug again.

Her eyes widen, and she scoots closer to me. "Holy shit, Max. That's amazing."

I stare at the floor. "Not really, considering I fell for a straight girl."

A look of realization crosses over her face, and she starts nodding. I glance over at her. "Did you know?"

"I didn't *know* know, but this does explain a fuck ton." She puts a hand on top of mine. "Want to tell me about it?"

"Yes." I take a deep breath, and then I let it all out. " Ok. So, I've known I was bi since literally fourth grade, but I didn't really get it until sixth. There was this... new girl." I glance over at her for a second time and see that she's smiling, like she knows exactly what I'm talking about. "And she was hot, and she wore crop tops and lace bras and eyeliner, and she had all this red hair, way straighter than mine, and she was *so cool*. She also had a boyfriend. But thus began a two year infatuation that was abruptly cut short when I moved here. I knew that wasn't love because I was twelve, and because thinking about someone when you get interrogated about crushes doesn't mean you're in love. And I never told anyone because... that reaction wasn't about to go down well."

I take a deep breath and pray that the tears behind my eyes don't

come through. This is the hard part.

“But then I met Eleven, and everything flipped upside down.” I feel myself starting to smile. “Because Eleven doesn’t wear crop tops or eyeliner, and she wasn’t a seventh grade boy magnet, and she isn’t popular, and she barely ever speaks, but when she does it means something, and it proves that you matter to her. And when she looks at you, you know she’s focusing on you, because she’s always focused. And she’s so beautiful - like, have you seen her hair? And she has the most adorable smile I’ve ever seen in my life. And...” I trail off, noticing that Robin is shaking with silent laughter. I shove her. “Shut up, you were this much of a dork once.”

“Oh, believe me, I know. Doesn’t make this any less enjoyable, though.” She leans back against the counter. “So. Are you going to ask her out?”

“God no, I’m too paranoid. Besides, she’s straight.”

“No, she’s not.”

Robin and I both turn our heads to find Steve standing in the doorway to the storage room, his tote slung across his back. He’s clearly about to head home.

I stare at him. “What do you mean, no she’s not?”

“She came in the other day asking about lesbian romance movies. I told her to ask Robin, but I think she went chickenshit. Then, the next day, Will came in asking about the same thing, and when I asked why, he said that he wanted something new to watch with El. Something about a sleepover.”

Oh.

Holy *shit*.

“Look,” Steve continues. “I don’t know for sure. But Max, she blushes every time you walk into the room. I’ve had that look thousands of times.” He smirks at Robin. “Had it with that one, actually.”

“That was stage three of denial for you, dingus,” Robin says.

"Ignoring that. Max, just ask her. You'll never know if you don't try. This is your first big chance. If it goes badly, you live, you learn, you move on - you're fifteen, for fuck's sake. But if it goes well..."

I know my hands are shaking, but I don't care, because he's right. He's completely fucking right. I have to take this chance.

"I'm going over there now," I say suddenly, not even intending to.

Robin's eyes widen. "Isn't it late for a lovestruck confession?"

"Don't care." I grab my board and run for the door. "Thanks guys!"  
"Anytime, kid!" Steve calls as the door closes behind me.

...

Hop looks surprised when he sees me standing on the front stoop. He stares at me. "Hey, are you -"

"I have to talk to El." I'm looking through him, right into the house, where I can see Eleven's green door slightly ajar.

"Does your brother know you're here?" Hop still looks skeptical.

"Yes, now please let me in." Now I look right at him, staring him down. "This is important."

He nods, stepping aside.

I knock on El's doorjamb, and when she calls, "Come in!" I step inside and close the door behind me.

Eleven is sitting on her bed reading something - it's a book that looks longer than everything I've ever read combined. She looks up, and instantly turns white when she sees me. "You scared me! I thought you were dad."

"Nope." I sit at the foot of her bed, wringing my hands in my lap. "I need to talk to you."

She closes the book. "Ok."

Jesus Christ I'm so fucking scared.

I take a deep breath. "El. I... um..."

She's staring at me, unblinking. "Max? Are you ok?"

"Yeah, no, it's just..." I'm tripping over my words, and I think the temperature just went up ten degrees. "El. I've got this thing. And I really need to tell you, because it's kind of all I think about, and I just need to know..."

There I go with the fucking stuttering again.

She scoots a little closer, and now I have a clearer look at her face. She's still confused.

Fuck me.

"Never mind." I turn away. "I'm sorry, it's not important."

"Max..." She seems to be considering something, but then changes her mind and switches course. "Can I ask you a question?"

I blink. "Um. Sure?"

"Have you ever been in love?"

Shit.

"Yes." I say it without thinking. "I think so."

"Well," she says. "I think I'm falling for someone."  
Shit. "Oh."

"But I don't know... I don't know if it's real. Because I know it wasn't real with Mike." I see that her hands are shaking. "When it happened to you, how did it feel?"

"What?"

She's inching closer to me. "How does it feel to be in love?"

What the fuck is happening?

I look at her carefully and consider my words, because at this point I'll entertain anything if it means she'll keep looking at me. "Well... you get butterflies. Looking at them, I mean. You love their smile, and the sound of their voice."

Her voice softens. "What else?"

"You can't stop staring at them. You think about them all the time. You stalk them. You're obsessed, and then you're guilty, and then you're head over heels. Because when she—" I choke on the word. "When she looks at you, you die on the inside knowing she'll never love you, because it's the 1980s and love isn't real, and nobody will accept it even if it could happen. And you accept that for a day, and then when you wake up it's all started over again, because this girl..." I'm looking directly into her eyes now. "This girl is the best damn thing that ever happened to you."

She's watching me closely, a small smile on her face. Then she bursts out laughing.

"What the hell?" I ask. "You're the one that asked."

"I'm sorry, it's just..." She's giggling, and she's taken full hold of my hand. "I only asked to make you say it."

I'm confused, and then suddenly I get it, and I shove her, laughing. "You sly devil."

She puts her head on my shoulder. "So, it's true? You like me?"

"Yeah."

"Me too."

My head shoots up. "What?"

She leans closer, and I know what's about to happen, and I'm not ready, but I'm so ready.

"May I?" She whispers.

I nod, swallowing hard, and then she leans in and kisses me.

My first kiss. And it's with Eleven.

It's awkward as hell that first time. She pulls away, but I grab her arm, and I smile, and then she smiles, and I feel warm on the inside. And this time I kiss her. And we find a rhythm, and her hands go up in my hair, and then we're suddenly horizontal. And I don't know if I expected my first kiss to go this far, but it's Eleven, and I want it all. She opens her mouth a little, and I sigh, sharing her breath. It's all messy, and it's nowhere near perfect, but it's Eleven.

When we return to a seated position, she's playing with my fingers, intertwining them with her own. "I like this."

"Me too."

"Are we going to tell anyone?"

"If you want to."

"I do."

"Then yes."

"But you're scared."

"Fuck fear. If it means I get to kiss you in public, I could give a damn. Speaking of which." I kiss her again. She kisses my neck, and I remember that I'm wearing a tank top, and feel myself blush.

She grins, her dimples on full display. "You're so cute when you're nervous. I've always wanted to tell you that."

"You're so cute when you smile." I shift into her lap - I'm not sure when she got taller than me, but it's definitely going to be useful. We go back into a hard liplock, and I don't care that we've been making out for at least ten minutes, because if it were up to me I would never stop kissing her.

"You girls ok in there?" Hopper calls through the door. "Awfully quiet."

"We're ok, dad!" El calls back, giggling as I tickle the inside of her

wrist.

“Ok. Max, do you want to sleep over?”

“Yes please!”

“Alright, I’ll call Billy.” I hear him walking away from the door, and then I turn back to El and resume my new favorite pastime. Her hands are pressed against my lower back, and the connection of skin on skin makes me feel electric. I run a hand up and down her arm - god, I never know what to do with my hands.

“So, I say. “Do you have, like, a label that you like for yourself?”

She shakes her head. “I don’t really know what they are.”

“Well, there’s gay, obviously, and lesbian.” She nods, and I continue. “Then there’s bisexual, which is what I am. It means that I can be attracted to more than one gender, but not all genders. Gender matters more to me in who I have a crush on. There’s pansexual, which is similar to bi, but gender doesn’t particularly matter to you. You love the person, not their gender.”

“Pansexual.” She tests the word, and then says it more confidently. “Pansexual. I think that’s me.”

“You don’t need to feel pressured to choose a label.”

“I like labels. Words... they make sense to me, when I learn them.” She traces the lines on my palm. “That being said, talking about labels is a lot less fun than kissing you.”

When we finally go to sleep, we’re curled up next to each other in warm pajamas, and we’re still holding hands as we drift off.

“Goodnight, El,” I murmur as my eyes close.

I feel her push a lock of hair off my face. “Goodnight, love.”

...

Three days later, we’re back at the video store, and we’re girlfriends.

We both carpool with the Byers now, and stop to get coffee for the whole gang. When we enter the store, Robin, as usual, lunges for the coffee and Jonathan, as usual, makes her suffer for a few seconds before finally handing it over.

The first day we walked in holding hands, when Max kissed me on the mouth about five seconds after we arrived, I thought Mike's eyes might pop out of his head. But everyone asked us questions, and then they did their best to understand, and after a couple hours, we were back to laughing and chatting like normal. Only difference was, I was standing a lot closer to El than I usually did.

That first day, I almost choked on tears when I saw Robin and Steve. I mouthed *thank you* to both of them, and they just smiled knowingly.

I don't really know what lies ahead for us. The world isn't pretty. It's not gonna be easy. But for now, I have Eleven next to me, and she's smiling that beautiful (and just a little sexy) smile, and I couldn't ask for anything more. I'm so damn happy.

When we leave, she grabs my hand, and I don't let it go the whole walk home.